

Washington, DC – Congressman John Hall (NY-19) grilled the President of BP America, Lamar McKay at a hearing on Wednesday in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on the BP Oil Spill. The spill began when an explosion on April 20th critically damaged BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig. The safety measures to prevent large scale oil leaks failed, and oil has been pouring into the Gulf of Mexico at a catastrophic rate ever since.

The Committee focused on the environmental impacts of the oil spill, which is pumping hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico with no end in sight. Congressman Hall's questions were directed at BP's use of hundreds of thousands of gallons of chemical dispersants, which are being used to dilute the oil slick. These chemicals have not undergone rigorous testing, have never been used in such mass quantities, and have never been used as deep underwater as BP is using them today. There is some evidence that these chemicals are highly toxic, and could have long lasting effects on human health and the Gulf ecosystem.

Hall asked McKay if BP has any idea whether the dispersants being used are harmful to human health. He asked if BP knew whether they bioaccumulated in larger animals, like mercury. And he asked if the chemicals contained any known carcinogens. McKay could not answer the questions.

After the hearing, Hall commented on McKay's inability to explain exactly what his company is putting into the Gulf of Mexico. "BP's failure to tell Congress and the public what is in these chemicals is shameful," Hall said. We have no idea, and neither does BP, what these chemicals could be doing to the water, the fish, and the health of the people who live near the Gulf of Mexico. I am disgusted that BP's response to the oil spill is to shoot even more chemicals into already polluted water."

Hall also demanded that McKay explain to the Committee why BP is using a dispersant that is more toxic and less effective than other EPA approved chemicals. Once again, McKay was caught flatfooted and could not respond.

Hall demanded that McKay provide the Committee with the answers to his questions in writing. "Congress needs to hold these corporate polluters accountable."

Finally, under questioning from Hall, McKay acknowledged, under oath, that BP was the responsible party and would be liable for the effects of not just the oil spill but also the dispersants. "I'll be working to make sure that BP keeps its word," Hall said after the hearing. "Last year BP had more than \$6 billion in profits alone. They had better spend every last dime cleaning up this mess and taking care of the people who are suffering from the effects of the oil spill."

[View video of the exchange](#) .